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DATE DUE

Services, jobs secure as officials debate budget

Molly Tippen
Staff Writer

In a sea of revenue cuts that has battered municipalities for the past five years, the City of Romulus has emerged much better off than many other communities.

Mayor Alan Lambert said the city would begin the 2005-06 fiscal year in July with a \$1.3 million fund balance and no discernable cuts to the \$21 million operating budget.

"We've been lucky that we're not facing the same sort of crisis some of our neighbors are," he said. "I've talked with mayors in other cities, and they're really suffering right now."

Negotiations between the city and department heads are ongoing in a series of public hearings. Lambert said the city is not asking for any layoffs at this time.

"We're doing this with no layoffs and no cuts in services, which is great for residents," he said. "We've asked employees to be conservative about spending. We asked them not to purchase anything they don't need, and this has helped us greatly."

City officials said they believe about eight city employees — many of whom are part of the Romulus Police

"We've been lucky that we're not facing the same sort of crisis some of our neighbors are. I've talked with mayors in other cities, and they're really suffering right now."

Mayor Alan Lambert

Department — will retire in the coming year. Those police employees will be replaced.

Closing the gap on the 2005-06 budget — which is about 3 percent smaller than the 2004-05 budget — was achieved through a combination of increasing fees for some city services and belt-tightening in terms of purchases and expenditures. The city council, at the April 7 meeting, approved a new fee schedule that brought fees in line with neighboring municipalities. The fees that were increased are mainly police services that include copying reports, fingerprinting for employment, processing concealed weapon applications, and performing vehicle VIN

inspections.

It has been 10 years since fees have been raised in the city, Lambert said.

The city will also receive about \$1 million in airport parking fees that will increase the general fund, officials said.

Another aspect of maintaining fiscal equilibrium is the rate of development in the city. For the past five years, the city has aggressively sought new development, which is now yielding additional funds in the form of property taxes and fee permits.

"A lot of cities are struggling because they don't have any land left to develop and expand," Lambert said. "But we still have a lot of areas we can develop, and that means we can still find ways to grow revenue."

Assistance from the county in growing the economic base has helped the city stave off budget worries, too.

"We have a good relationship with (County Executive) Robert Ficano that we didn't have with the prior administration," Lambert said. "They have provided quite a bit of assistance."

Lambert said a mutual relationship with the county

See **Budget**, page 3



Understanding diversity

Merriman Elementary School recently sponsored an event designed to help all children understand the differences — and similarities — of cultures at the first annual Multicultural Night. Michelle Dillon, above, and her daughters, Aubrey, Alonka and Sarena viewed the Italian display with their friends Raven Rogers and Nashelle Hill. Parent Lisa Clark (left) and her daughter, Annalise, and son, Connor, enjoy the Mexican exhibit.



Van Buren votes for alternative education

Andrea King
Staff Writer

Officials of the Van Buren Public School District may be singing a different tune.

Rather than closing Elwell Elementary School in order to house an alternative education program, school board members unanimously voted to start their own program to be housed in portable classrooms at the vocational education facility on Sumpter Road.

Originally, school officials said the most appropriate place to put the program would be at Elwell Elementary where the district has the least number of students. Parental opposition caused them to reconsider.

Parents welcomed the change at the board meeting Monday.

"I'm excited about the opportunity the program can bring to the district, as well as the change from last week's study session," said Lynnette Rose. "There should be a separate committee formed for these things (school closures) because members of this board and administration have lost the public trust. Everyone needs to be truthful upfront."

Pete Lazaroff, superintendent of schools, said the intention of officials has always been the same: to put together a quality program that meets the needs of students that the district hasn't been able to meet so far.

"I feel confident that we'll be able to reach 80-100 students for

our program without bringing us into the red or in further deficit," he said.

Currently, about 200 students are enrolled in the Romulus alternative education program, in which about 120 students are from the Van Buren district. The foundation grant — the amount of money the state allocates to each student to attend a specific school — follows the student, which means the Romulus program could take a financial hit if the Van Buren students stay in their own district.

"The kids can choose to stay in Romulus. We certainly can't make them come back," said Lazaroff.

"The Romulus program currently has a waiting list because they have reached their capacity so there is a need in this area," said Lazaroff. "It will bring the kids and revenue back, but it will not solve our budget problems."

Cost estimates for the new program would be around \$195,000 for the operation and about \$500,000 total including staff, Lazaroff said.

Joel Carr, Romulus superintendent of schools, said he didn't think losing some of the students would negatively impact the Romulus program.

"I don't know that there will be any impact," said Carr. "We have a good program, and we've been at it for a long time. There are a handful of those students from that district that are part of our program. We'll have to see what, if any, impact there is."

Builder pulls out of local development

A proposed development slated for a parcel of land on Wayne and Ecorse roads was dealt a setback recently when the builder of the homes backed out of the plan.

Bloomfield Hills-based Pulte Homes informed the developer of the site, Grant Perry, that they were backing out because they had too many projects in the works, said Tim Keyes, city eco-

nomic developer.

"My impression of this was that they were re-evaluating their projects, and that they were backing out of four or five of them," he said. "They are re-assessing, and I wasn't under the impression that this had anything to do with the city or the project itself."

But Keyes said the project would be delayed now that the

city and Perry are forced to find a new builder.

"We were disappointed, but there are a lot of other guys out there," he said. "We just need to find one. We are moving forward with Grant, and we're still committed to the project."

Perry and Pulte Homes were planning to build 200 single-

See **Builder**, page 3

Art show and dessert gala benefit planned

Andrea King
Staff Writer

Belleville High School and the Belleville Area Council for the Arts (BACA) will combine sweets and art for the annual scholarship art show and dessert gala.

The dessert gala, which will feature treats from more than 20 area restaurants, will take place from 8-10 p.m.

and will pre-view the art show scheduled from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. The show is designed to create pride among students, respect for art and appreciation by the community of the artistic abilities of the students, according to Ken Askew, organizer of the event.

"It's a multi-faceted program to touch thousands of lives in the school and the community," he said.

Working together with the Van Buren Public School District and the St. Anthony Academy, the BACA started the program 12 years ago to inspire young artists and recognize them with honors and scholarships.

"Arts in the schools were

something that was very much threatened. It seemed that every time there was going to be school program cuts, it was going to be the arts, so we wanted to create something that was going to develop art and promote it in the community," said Askew.

"The kids work very, very hard and even the little kids get excited because everyone receives a ribbon," said Loretta McLain, BACA public relations intern. "I've gotten involved because it's important to keep this going. It's really a wonderful occasion."

Both events will take place at the Belleville High School cafeteria and will fund a \$1,000 scholarship for a high school senior with the best portfolio of three or more works. A \$500 savings bond will also be presented to the Best in Show, as well as awards for first, second and third place and merit ribbons with certificates given to all grade levels.

Askew said that the art show has become a traditional element in the school year for the students, and Kathy L. Murphy,



South Middle School students Nicole Bliven and Joshua Cheers are two of the many who participated in the scholarship art show in the past. This year, the Belleville Area Council for the Arts anticipates more than 750 student entries.

art educator at the high school, couldn't agree more.

"It's so big that we don't even need to encourage the students to get involved. They already know about it and really want to be apart of it," she said. "I expect the same as I have in the past: high quality, creativity and unbelievable talent. It's really a huge deal."

According to Askew, the annual event attracts more than 750 entries from the students, who also have the opportunity to sell their work at the show. The effects have been evident not only in the pride among students, but also among parents who discover a new value to their child's

talent, he said.

To strengthen the bonds with the community, the BACA invites celebrity judges from the media, government and area businesses. They include: State Sen. Bruce Patterson (R-Canton); State Rep. Phil LaJoy (R-Canton); Josephine Kelsey, past director of the Michigan Guild of Artists and Artisans; Leslie Greeneisen, director of the gallery for the Plymouth Community Art Center; Richard Rubinfeld, art professor at Eastern Michigan University and local artists Chesley Odum, Diane Eissinger and Jane Kovach.

This year, a special performance by harpist Catherine

Heise, who serves on the Wayne County Council for Art, History and Humanities, will also take place at the dessert gala.

Tickets for the gala are \$25 and can be purchased at: the Belleville Area Chamber of Commerce, Flowers by Katherine Rose, Blossoms Florist, Garden Fantasy or at the door. The art show is free.

"The presence of art in the community is an amenity that adds to the quality of life in many cities, towns and villages across the nation. To make artworks a part of daily life and activity is to enrich the living quality of everyone who has the opportunity to enjoy the art," said Askew.

District names new assistant principals

The Van Buren Board of Education recently appointed Rodney Fischer and Michael Van Tassel to assistant principal positions at Belleville High School for the 2005-2006 school year.

"The positions were posted for four weeks and we received 68 applications, but after careful review we chose five outstanding candidates to interview, then three until the final two—Fischer and Van Tassel were chosen," said Schools Superintendent Pete Lazaroff.

Fischer, who has been an interim principal for the past two years, has worked at the high school since 1994. Van Tassel is currently the district band director.

The school board also appointed Keith Wetters, who is currently assistant principal at John Glenn High School in Bay City, as assistant principal at South Middle School for the 2005-2006 school year. He will replace assistant principal Michelle Herring who will become principal.

CITY OF ROMULUS NOXIOUS WEED NOTICE TO THE PROPERTY OWNERS IN THE CITY OF ROMULUS

In accordance with P.A. 359 of 1941, as amended and Chapter 19, Article 3, of the Romulus Code of Ordinances it shall be the duty of all owners of lands on which noxious weeds are found growing, to destroy the same before they reach a seed bearing stage and to prevent such weeds from becoming a detriment to public health.

If any such owner, agent or occupant of such land shall refuse to destroy such noxious weeds or cause them to be destroyed, it shall be the duty of the Noxious Weed Commissioner to enter upon such land and destroy such noxious weeds.

Nothing in this notice shall apply to weeds in fields devoted to growing any small grain crop such as wheat, oats, barley or rye.

All weeds not cut by June 1, 2005 will be cut by the City and the owner of the property will be charged with the cost. Subsequent violations will result in additional cuttings and will be done as often as necessary when vegetation reaches 12 inches in height and/or seed bearing stage.

Any expense incurred in such destruction shall be paid by the owner or owners of such land, and the city shall have a lien against such land for such expense. Any owner who shall refuse to destroy such noxious weeds shall also be subject to a fine of not more than \$100.00 per cutting in the discretion of the court.

All refuse and debris on the given owners property will be removed by the City at the owners' expense.

Publish: April 14, 2005

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Church expansion plan approved by officials

Molly Tippen
Staff Writer

Church services have become crowded during the past 11 years at the Romulus Community Baptist Church.

But the 15,000 square-foot facility on Fourth Street is getting a big makeover now that city council members have approved the application to expand the facility by 8,050 square feet. The expansion was approved Monday after the planning commission recommended the project move forward.

Pastor Hiram McBurroughs, who has led the congregation for the past 11 years, said the news sounded pretty good.

"We're going to have classrooms and meeting areas in the old area of the church, and worship will take place in the new section," he said. "The number of people who come to my church has grown by about 50

percent since I came, so we needed to expand."

Church leaders asked for city permission to expand last year, but there were challenges. Because the church is located in an area that is primarily residential, the church was forced to ask for four variances to allow for the new addition.

The zoning board of appeals granted the waivers last month to allow for ingress and egress from two local roads – which is normally prohibited in the zoning code. Other waivers were granted to allow the church to plant dense shrubs instead of providing a 4-foot masonry wall to separate the church property from that of area homeowners.

Before requesting the variances to the zoning code, church officials and the city worked together to try to find ways to provide for the expansion and additional parking, but could not identify a plan that was feasible for the city and the church.

"We tried a lot of plans like a property swaps, and we just didn't find anything that would work," McBurroughs said.

The expansion will rest on eight vacant lots owned by the church that are adjacent to the church, near Martin and Colorado streets. The west side of the property, near Colorado Street, is earmarked for 90 additional parking spaces to accommodate parishioners.

McBurroughs said he hopes the expansion will allow for meetings and classes that he has long wanted to offer parishioners, but was unable to because of the size of the facility.

TNC Construction of Canton Township designed and will construct the new addition. The church expects to break ground on the expansion by summer, and construction will continue for about 10 months.

Romulus Community Baptist Church is one of nine Baptist churches in Romulus.

Belleville Comeriaca robbed

Andrea King
Staff Writer

Public safety officials continue to look for clues to the identity of the man who robbed a Comerica Bank last week, according to Sgt. Greg Laurain of the Van Buren Township Police Department.

A picture taken from the bank surveillance camera was released last week of the robber, whom police described as a white male in his late 50s to mid 60s, about 5-



Singing from the heart

Romulus schools resident diva and sixth-grade teacher Tavia Redmond (third from left) flexed her vocal muscles by leading students in a rendition of the African American national anthem "Lift Every Voice and Sing" at the Wick Elementary African American Influence on American Music concert last week. The program featured a full array of tributes to great African American musicians in the genres of gospel, blues and jazz as well as Motown and hip-hop. Dance performances also help stress the effect of African American music on the culture as a whole. Here (left to right), Chelsea Roper, Natalia Brown, Brienna Boyd, Diamond Chandler and Bre'ana West join Redmond on stage.

Builder - Exit will not derail project, developer sought

FROM PAGE 1

feet, 8-inches tall with medium-length gray hair and a mustache. He was seen wearing glasses, a dark shirt and dark colored pants.

So far, Van Buren investigators have been unable to link him to other robberies that have recently taken place, but they continue to work with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

The man is accused of robbing the Comerica Bank on Belleville Road near I-94 at 4:02 p.m. on April 6. He took about \$350 in cash, police said.

"He told the teller that it was a 'hold-up', but never that he had a weapon, although it was perceived by the teller that he did," said Laurain. "The teller gave him what he asked for and put it in a trash bag."

family homes on the parcel of land at Ecorse and Wayne. The parameters of the project will remain the same: Perry will provide infrastructure – such as provisions for water and electricity – while a builder actually constructs the homes.

The unexpected exit of Pulte Homes, however, means the project will not likely begin as planned, Keyes said.

Mark Marymee, a spokesman for Pulte Homes, did not return phone calls

about the company's departure from Romulus. Mayor Alan Lambert said he's unaware of any conflicts between the developer, builder and city, and said there is speculation that the builder might want to negotiate another deal. But he said confirming Pulte's interest has been difficult.

"They got approval months ago and we were very interested in them," he said. "The city was happy with what they were doing; we helped them as much as we could, so we were disappointed. But now we can't get a

hold of anyone over there, and we're hearing rumors that they want in.

"We're just going to have to wait to see how it plays out," he said. "But I think (backing out of the project) was crummy of them."

Attempts to reach Perry for comment were unsuccessful.

The development is one of several in the planning or building construction stages in Romulus. Keyes said there are 1,000 homes in about nine subdivisions currently under construction.

Budget - County assistance helps avoid service cuts

FROM PAGE 1

The man was last seen fleeing north on Belleville Road in a silver or gray Nissan that has noticeable damage to the passenger side and a missing license plate.

Now, police officials are asking for help from the public.

Anyone who has more information about the case is urged to call the Van Buren Public Safety Department at 734-699-8939.

was virtually non-existent for several years, which placed communities like Romulus in a difficult spot.

"It was difficult to get any attention under the old regime," he said. "But now, we're in contact with the county, which has assisted us with the Magna deal

and other projects. Magna Entertainment could possibly open a \$100 million racetrack in Romulus if the Michigan Gaming Control Board approves their gaming license. That project could bring an additional \$3 million a year in revenue for the city.

Councilman Mike Prybyla said he's satisfied with the city's fiscal position.

"We've been fortunate that we're not going to have to decrease our services," he said. "We have sound fiscal management. It's great to be living in Romulus right now."

Budget hearings will continue for the next two months. In accordance with state law, municipalities are required to file their approved budgets by June 30.

News in brief

"File for Life" cards are now available

The Romulus Senior Center in conjunction with the Fire Department will offer "File for Life" cards at the senior center beginning today. The bright red card – which seniors are advised to attach to their refrigerator – allows emergency personnel to obtain crucial information in case a senior is incapacitated. The red card allows for a photo of the person in a dwelling, and the attached white card allows the occupant to list conditions, medications and other information so paramedics can begin treating the person. Fire Chief David Allison said the cards can eliminate a number of confusing situations that arise when a resident has an emergency, but is unable to verbally provide medical information. Cards cost \$1, but no resident will be turned away because of their inability to pay. For more information or to obtain a card, call the Romulus Senior Center at (734) 942-6852.

Book sale scheduled

The Friends of the Romulus Public Library used book sale will begin on Monday, April 18. The sale will run through Wednesday, April 20, with a special bag day on April 23. Both hardcover and paperbacks are included in the sale with a handful of audio books. Fiction and non-fiction books are available. The bag day means book lovers can purchase books by the bagful for only \$1.50. The Romulus Public Library is located at 11121 Wayne Road, next door to city hall. For more information, call the library at (734) 942-7589.

Free clothing available

People in need of new and used men's, women's and children's clothing are invited to attend the Maranatha Gospel Church free clothing giveaway from noon to 6 p.m. on Saturday, April 30. The church hosts free clothing events several times a year to help area residents in need. The clothing is in good condition and is collected by parishioners of the church. The church is located at 35413 Beverly Road, between Merriman and Wayne roads. For more information, call the church at (734) 968-7203.

OBITUARIES

STEWART, Raymond

Raymond P. Stewart, 68, a 36-year resident of the Romulus area, died April 4.

Among his survivors are his wife, Patricia A. (Tush) Stewart; sons, Kenneth P. (Jennifer) Stewart of Taylor and Randy P. Stewart of Romulus; daughters, Carolyn M. (Kevin) Welch of Romulus and Laurie A. (Mark)

Kropog of Commerce Township; brothers, Ralph (Mollie) Stewart of Danbury and Billy (Kay) Stewart of Lake Placid, Fla.; five grandchildren, and a great-grandchild.

Funeral services were at the Crane Funeral Home in Romulus with Pastor Robert J. White of Grace Baptist Church in Belleville officiating.

Cremation rites have been accorded.

BALLESTEROS, Anecita

Anecita G. Ballesteros, 69, a 30-year resident of Belleville, died March 3.

Among her survivors are her sisters, Florita Britt and Lina Ballesteros, both of Belleville, and a niece, April.

Mrs. Ballesteros was a member of St. Anthony Catholic Church where Father Thomas H. Cusick celebrated a funeral mass for her.

Cremation rites were accorded.

Arrangements were entrusted to the David C. Brown Funeral Home in Belleville.

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF VAN BUREN REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES APRIL 5, 2005

Supervisor King called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Board Room. Present: Supervisor King, Clerk Payne, Treasurer Budd, Trustee Hart, Trustee Herman, Trustee Jahr and Trustee Rochowiak. Absent and excused: None. Others in attendance: Planning and Economic Development Director Kelley, Public Safety Director Champagne, Recreation and Facilities Director Ross, Environmental Director Swallow, Deputy Public Safety Director Smolen, Lieutenant Kenneth Brooks, Planning and Zoning Administrator Pugsley, Water and Sewer Director Duha, Special Events Coordinator Mutch, Executive Assistant Ireland, Secretary Cline and an audience of fifty-seven (57).

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Payne moved, Budd seconded to approve the agenda as amended to table New Business Item #1 "Consider approval of: a) Creation of the position Information Technology (IT) Coordinator. b) IT Coordinator job description and salary range. c) IT Coordinator candidate search." from consideration in order to: 1) Review and update the current IT systems management contract specifications for the Township that could include the preparation of a new request for proposal and a search for companies to bid these specifications. 2) Review the fiscal impacts and perhaps better measure whether the Township should use an outside contractor or move to hire staff to manage the IT systems and be directly on the Township payroll. 3) Better understand and flush out the position by some members of the Board that these proposed changes to the Department of Public Safety may in fact interfere with needs in other Township Departments. 4) And finally to confirm the proposed improvements can be done for less cost to the Township. Carried.

PUBLIC HEARING: None.

MINUTES: Budd moved, Hart seconded to approve the Work Study Session Minutes of March 14, 2005 as presented. Carried.

Hart moved, Herman seconded to approve the Regular Board Meeting Minutes of March 15, 2005 as presented. Carried.

CORRESPONDENCE: Director Champagne acknowledged Sergeant Laurain for his recent graduation from the FBI academy.

Supervisor King, Director Champagne, Lieutenant Brooks and Trustee Hart announced the promotions of Police Officer Michael Moening and Detective Mark Buckberry to the rank of Sergeant and presented them with their badges. Supervisor King, Director Champagne, Deputy Director Smolen, Trustee Hart and Treasurer Budd announced the promotions of Fire Lieutenants Anthony Karver and David McInally to the rank of Captain; Acting Lieutenants Daniel Besson and David Traskos to the rank of Lieutenant; Firefighters David Tozer and William Gage to the rank of Lieutenant and presented them with their badges.

Supervisor King acknowledged Captain Karver who has coordinated Van Buren Township's annual blood drive stating Van Buren Township has received an award from the American Red Cross for being the most improved community.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS: Budd moved, Jahr seconded to approve the sale of Township owned property known as 687 Savage Road, tax number V125-83-105-99-0061-000 in an amount of \$50,000 to Habitat for Humanity of Western Wayne County, with the condition that a lien be placed upon the property in the amount of \$50,000 until such time as Habitat for Humanity has satisfied and provided documentation meeting the requirements of the Housing of Urban Development (HUD) and Van Buren Township guidelines to serve and benefit a low to moderate income family and that Wayne County approves the use of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for this project and to authorize the Supervisor and Clerk to execute appropriate documents, drafted by Township legal counsel, to conclude the transaction. Carried.

Payne moved, Rochowiak seconded to approve the lot split of parcel V125-83-112-02-0083-000, lot 83, Roulo's Subdivision, in accordance with the Parcel Division Board memorandum dated March 17, 2005, specifically noting items one through seven. Carried.

Hart moved, Budd seconded to approve the appointment of Andrea Gornick to the Public Safety Committee with term to expire July 30, 2006 and to acknowledge Holly Konrad for her service. Carried.

Jahr moved, Herman seconded to adopt Resolution 2005-13 to approve Supplement #15 to the Downriver Sewage Disposal System Financing Plan and Final Judgment, to affirm the Township's intent to finance its share of the Supplement #15 improvements with bonds to be issued by Wayne County in a maximum principal amount not to exceed \$15,790,000 (total for all communities), to approve issuance of the bonds by Wayne County, to authorize the Supervisor, Clerk and all other officials of Van Buren to take all actions necessary for issuance of the bond, and to acknowledge the requirement to levy judgment payment millage for annual debt service payments if not paid in cash by September 30th of each year. Carried.

Payne moved, Hart seconded to adopt Resolution 2005-14 which approves construction of certain improvements to the Downriver Sewage Disposal System wastewater

treatment facility in Wyandotte, approves the financing contract and State Revolving Fund (SRF) bond issuance in an amount not to exceed \$4,760,000, obliges Van Buren Township to pay its share of the annual debt service on the bonds, pledges its full faith and credit, and authorizes the Supervisor, Clerk and all other officials of Van Buren to take all actions necessary for issuance of the bond. Carried.

Jahr moved, Herman seconded to adopt Resolution 2005-15 which approves construction of certain improvements to the Downriver Sewage Disposal System wastewater treatment facility in Wyandotte, approves the financing contract and bond issuance in an amount not to exceed \$3,805,000, obliges Van Buren Township to pay its share of the annual debt service on the bonds, pledges its full faith and credit, and authorizes the Supervisor, Clerk and all other officials of Van Buren to take all actions necessary for issuance of the bond. Carried.

Rochowiak moved, Payne seconded to approve Hydro Designs Inc.'s proposal dated March 22, 2005 to provide a cross-connection control program for non-residential water accounts for a three-year period and to authorize the Supervisor and Clerk to execute the contract. Carried.

Payne moved, Hart seconded to adopt Resolution 2005-16 approving the Van Buren Estates Ash Tree Replacement Project. Carried.

Hart moved, Payne seconded to approve the contract for the Van Buren Estates Ash Tree Replacement Project between the Charter Township of Van Buren and Reliable Landscaping, Inc. in the amount of \$21,300, with a 10 percent contingency budget in the amount of \$2,130, and to authorize the Supervisor and Clerk to execute the contract. Carried.

Budd moved, Hart seconded to approve the 2005 Fireworks contract with Great Lakes Fireworks, and to authorize the Supervisor and Clerk to execute the contract. Carried.

Rochowiak moved, Herman seconded to adopt Resolution 2005-17 opposing the Executive Office of the United States proposed changes to the budget and operation of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. Carried.

Budd moved, Hart seconded to approve the contract with Midwest Waterproofing Company for improvements to the Belleville Area Museum building located at 405 Main Street, at a cost of \$11,200 noting money will be transferred from the Landfill Fund to the Capital Improvement Fund to cover this cost. Carried.

VOUCHER LIST: Budd moved, Hart seconded to approve the April 5, 2005 voucher list as presented. Carried.

REPORTS: None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Wayne County Department of Environment is sponsoring a Household Hazardous Waste Collection on Saturday, April 16th from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Romulus Civic Center located at 11111 Wayne Road, Romulus. For more information contact the Wayne County Department of Environment at 734.326.3936.

The Board Meeting of Tuesday, May 3, 2005 has been canceled due to the Election on Tuesday, May 3, 2005 where voters will choose school board members in both Van Buren and Lincoln school districts. New Voter Identification Cards will be mailed to all registered voters in Van Buren Township due to the consolidation of elections noting your polling location will be your regular municipal polling location.

On Wednesday, April 6th a blood drive will be held at Trinity Episcopal Church.

The Drive-In Dog Clinic will be held on Saturday, May 7, 2005 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Water and Sewer building located behind Township Hall.

Deputy Director Smolen stated last year the Van Buren Fire Department help fulfill a Make a Wish request from Denver Jackson, a local youth who has been battling leukemia by attending his birthday party. Denver wanted to thank the Fire Department and the Make a Wish Foundation and has his own website where you can purchase his artwork at www.DenverJ.com with proceeds going to these groups. On Saturday, April 16th and 17th his artwork will be sold at the Belleville Road Wal-Mart. In addition, on Saturday May 14th at Van Buren Park from 2:00 to 8:00 p.m. Denver and the Make a Wish Foundation will be hosting a Fundraiser Fun Day.

Special Events Coordinator Mutch announced upcoming events: Sunday, May 1st a Mother/Daughter Tea Party will be held at Van Buren Township in the Community Center. Also, on Friday, May 13th a Mother/Son Rock N' Bowl Night will be held from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Lodge Lanes. To register and for more information please call 734.699.8921.

AUDIENCE (Non-Agenda Items): None.

CLOSED SESSION: None.

ADJOURNMENT: Hart moved, Payne seconded to adjourn at 9:18 p.m. Carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Joannie D. Payne, CMC
Township Clerk

Cindy C. King
Township Supervisor

Publish: April 14, 2005

OPINION

How much is too much?

Anyone that has served in public office will tell you it's not just the time at city council or township trustee meetings that takes up the bulk of their time.

There are always subcommittee assignments where officials discuss upcoming issues; many serve as liaisons to – if not appointments on – other boards and commissions or subcommittees, too. It's often the case, in fact, that the discussion residents see at the meetings, or on cable or read about in newspaper legal notices is the end result of a lot of prior planning, prior discussion and information gathering.

There's clearly a lot for them to do.

Recently, though, a couple of situations have come up that have caused us and others to ask: how much is too much?

In Northville Township, for example, officials have discussed – in the preliminary stages – a potential land swap between a prominent developer and the township. The exchange would net the township more than 150 acres of land suited for research and development use, while they would have to give up 15 acres of residentially-zoned land – provided they rezoned it for commercial use.

Again, it's just in the discussion phases. Because the township may ultimately want to lease the land, and because they can't legally do so, the transaction has to take place with the Economic Development Corporation (EDC). The EDC must come up with a plan for both sites, a model for how they'd fund the purchase from the township and then present it to the township planning commission and ultimately, the board of trustees.

The sticky point, according to some of those who oppose the idea – including Township Trustee Christopher Roosen – is that one person may be central to all of those bodies. Trustee Marv Gans is an elected trustee, appointed to the planning commission. He also chairs the EDC board and is heavily involved in recreation through the Friends of Northville Parks and Recreation, a group that he formed.

Obviously, there's a conflict of interest there, with one person involved in developing the plan and presenting it to the board of trustees. It's unfortunate, though, that Gans has had to bear the increased scrutiny brought up by this discussion and people have questioned his motives. He's served on both boards long before this issue even came up. He and other township officials recognize the conflict and know that, if it proceeds beyond the discussion phase, he'll have to step down from either the EDC or the planning commission. Gans' motives have always been sincere. He simply wants what's best for the community and has dedicated a large portion of his life to pushing that ideal, striving for that goal.

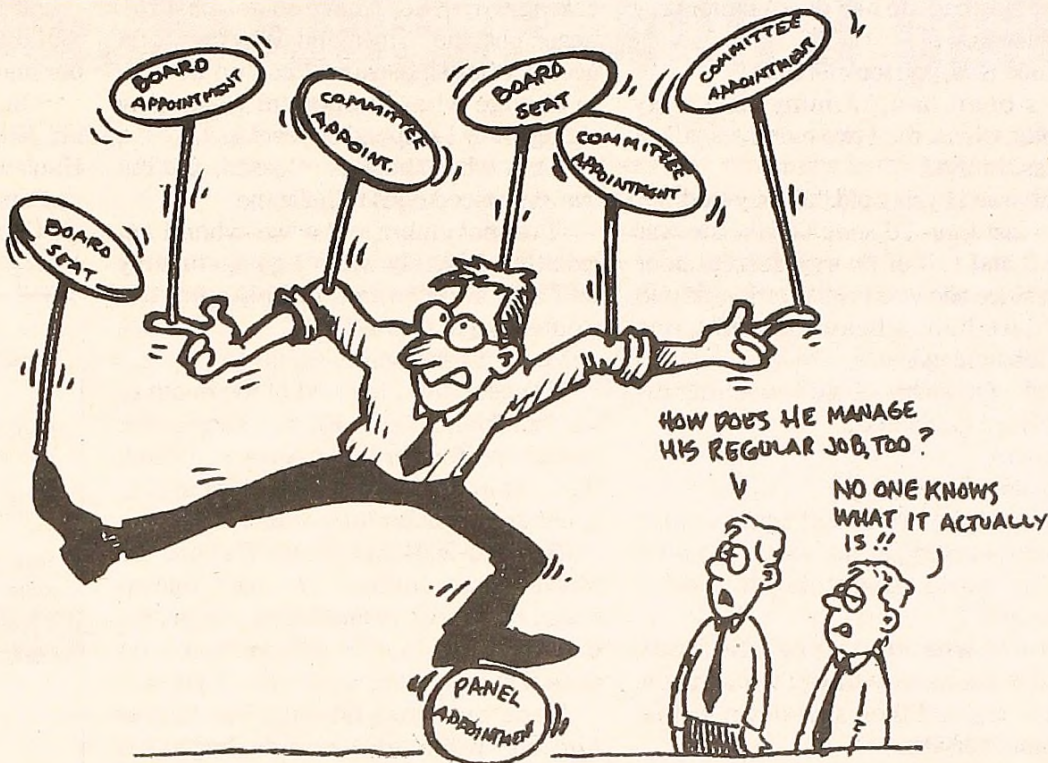
The same can be said for Wayne Mayor Al Haidous. His name came up at a recent Wayne City Council meeting, where members of the council were deciding who should best serve on separate subcommittees to evaluate City Manager John Zech and City Attorney Dick Clark. They're three-member committees and Haidous appoints members to both of them. In fact, he put himself on both committees.

The reason he gave was fairly logical: as the mayor, he had more detailed workings with each of the two positions, better knowledge of how they performed. It makes sense in that regard. Some members of the council, though, argued that it gave him too much leeway on such a small committee and too much input over two of the arguably most important posts in the City of Wayne.

That, too, makes sense. In fact, Haidous' argument can almost be used against him: his familiarity with the pair would give him a perfect reason to appoint someone other than himself to the committees.

How much is too much? We supposed it's a good problem for communities to have. It's nice to know that there are people serving with the experience and expertise to cast informed votes – and provide valuable input – on so many different issues.

It's also important to note, though, that there are plenty of other qualified people out there, with their own desires to serve.



Seasoned with success

Perception is everything.

That was part of the message behind the message of Greg Baracy, superintendent of the Wayne-Westland School District Tuesday afternoon.

Baracy and the district hosted the sixth annual Realtor's luncheon at Taft-Galloway Elementary school. The event was designed to point out the difference between what people think of the school district and what is actually going on there.

It was the second of two events designed to spotlight the district on Tuesday. The first had more formal business involved, a kindergarten round-up geared to provide the district with information about the incoming students and provide those students and their parents information about the district.

I'm glad I went to the luncheon, because it hit something I've constantly thought about right on the head. The school district is improving; it's a great place to send your kids. It only suffers from the perception of those who don't know what's been going in during the last several years.

I hear it all the time. It doesn't matter where I am, there's usually someone who wants to talk down the district, portray it in an unfavorable light.

That's one of the reasons I went. I get tired of hearing about it.

Here are some of the things Baracy pointed out during his brief speech at the end of the program. The district has performed well on its Education Yes! report cards, showing B's across the board. That's comparable or better than neighboring districts. Every school in the district has recently gone through a renovation project, recently as in the past five years. There's updated technology to go with the updated facilities, work being done on athletic

fields, no cuts have been made to services, and Wayne-Westland athletes don't have to pay to participate in high school sports.

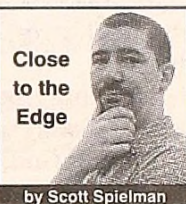
Add in the things that other schools don't have – notably the William D. Ford Career Technical facility, which provides vocational training for traditional and non-tradition (i.e. non-college bound) students alike. There are 23 different programs there, from computer-aided design to auto shop to culinary arts and nursing.

The district gets a higher foundation allowance, at \$7,396, than Plymouth-Canton, too.

I knew most of this – I researched it before I moved into Wayne. Sure, I picked my house and neighborhood because I could afford it (well, almost), but it was the school district that sold me.

So the luncheon was geared toward real estate agents, for the most part. It was designed to highlight the positives, but those positives were based in fact, with solid numbers, not merely pretty words and a tasty salad. I think it's a neat program, one designed to give those Realtors an easier time of selling homes in the district, which will bring in more people, more young families, which will in turn bring in more money and more students to the district. I particularly liked the way Baracy presented the information – not to take anything away from the neighboring districts, but merely to disprove the negative perceptions about the district.

Even afterward, there may still be the perception that the Wayne-Westland School district is not up to par with some other communities where \$300,000 homes are on the lower end of the price scale, but that perception is wrong. But don't take my word for it; check the numbers.



Close to the Edge

by Scott Spielman

Only the name is the same

Martin Luther King, Stephen King, Burger King. There are thousands of ways to say it and use it, along with thousands of people who have it: the last name King.

According to a website based on genealogy, King comes from the Old English origin "cynning" which originally meant "tribal leader." This nickname was commonly bestowed on a man who carried himself like royalty (something that I always do), or who played the part of a king in a medieval pageant (which I hope I never do). Occasionally, the name was given to a man who served in a royal household (which my household is far from.)

When I Asked Jeeves, how many people in the United States have the last name King he told me: King is number 30 on the most common last name list and, although less than .19 percent of the people in the United States have the last name, there are still 475,000 people in the United States that do

have it.

This just proves my point. The last name King is popular.

I have never formally traced my genealogical tree before, but after numerous questions, inquiries, declarations and accusations of people convinced – no, actually telling me – that I am the daughter of Cindy King, supervisor of Van Buren Township, I've decided today is going to be the day.

Who knows, maybe I am related?

I had no clue where to start so what better way to find your true family history than the Internet?

I began to search genealogy.about.com for the basics on how to get started on a family tree. The website directed me to interview my relatives starting with my mom and dad. (Here's the first



King's Court

by Andrea King

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See Name, page 6

Easy to say - but so hard to take action to help

I ran into an old friend the other day, and at first didn't recognize him. Jimmy was looking bad; he had death-pallor gray colored skin.

"Good God, you look terrible."
"It's been bad," Jimmy said. "My daughter, Olivia, died two months ago." I was stunned.
"She was 11 years old," Jimmy said.

The last time I'd seen Olivia, she was about 5 and full of energy despite poor health since she was born. Dark eyes and curly dark hair, a beautiful child, one you'd see in magazines.

"God. I'm sorry," I said touching his arm. "What happened?"
"Cancer."
"I'm deeply sorry."

The next day we talked again. Jimmy had been locked in his house, isolated from the world, devastated into deep depression.

"I know what to do," he said, "but, doing it is the hardest thing I've had to do. I start to cry and then shut down feeling guilty about crying.

"I know she was a teacher, but of what, I can't understand now. She was always cheerful, even in her most desperate hours.

"Watching her those final days was brutal," Jimmy said, and went silent.

"Thank God, I've never had to face what you're going through," I said. "And, I

agree that taking the action to re-establish strong faith is incredibly difficult if I keep asking why. So, I have to get past the anger, past the 'Whys,' and 'Why mes,' and accept what is, because I can do nothing to change what happened. I can only change how I respond or react to it.

"Only when the 'I' is released, and the 'we' embraced does relief come.

"I cannot embrace the 'we' when I am isolating. It's only when I go against my will and allow others to help, that the wounds begin to heal."

Life... it's so fragile.
The next day, I learned of the death of another friend. Merle Kilgore, songwriter, country performer and manager to Hank Williams Jr., died in Mexico while undergoing treatment for lung cancer.

The year 2004 had been a bad one for Merle. Heart surgery; two back operations and cancer. Brutal blows, I know, for this man who was always positive, who always lit up a room when he walked in.

Merle who wrote hit songs like *Ring of Fire*, and *Wolverton Mountain*, began his show business career toting the guitar of Hank Williams Sr.

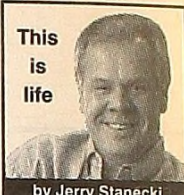
Merle had a lot of PT Barnum in him. Peter Cooper wrote in *The Tennessean* about the time Punch Andrews, Kid Rock's manager, called Merle saying Kid would like to meet Hank Jr. and maybe even record with him.

Having no idea who Kid Rock was at the time, Merle stalled, while quickly thumbing through *Billboard* Magazine. He found Kid Rock's song *Cowboy* was number one.

"Oh, Hank loves Kid Rock," exclaimed Mr. Kilgore. "He loves the song *Cowboy*. Hank would love to work with Kid Rock." Pure Merle.
Good night Merle, you brought a lot of

joy to a tired world.
You did good.

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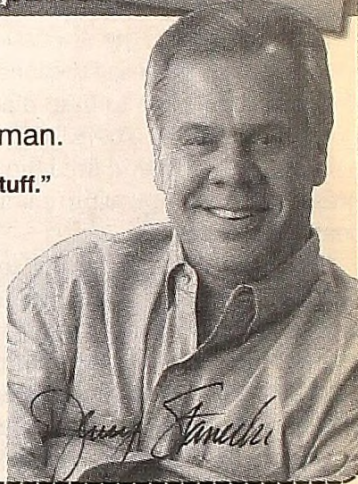
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Name

FROM PAGE 5

hint, they do not live in Belleville.)

So I did. The jist of what my mom told me was that I am mainly English, French, Polish and possibly German.

OK, that's a start, but I'm really not getting anywhere.

Next, I was to select a surname or a maiden name to research. Alright, so that would be Woolley. (Hint number two, I don't think that's the supervisor's maiden name.)

Lastly, I'm supposed to continue to visit cemeteries, courthouses, churches and

other places where my family has lived, organize my newly found information and, when I have gone as far as I can go, step back and take a break.

I think I have reached that point.
After my genealogical findings and proof of my birth certificate, I would like to clear the air and say: I am not the daughter of Supervisor Cindy King. I consider her a fine leader and a helpful person to work with, but, once again, I am not related to her.

Besides, if I were, wouldn't that be a conflict of interest?

In any case, I may not be the daughter of Supervisor Cindy King, but my mom's name is Cynthia. Her friends call her Cindy for short.

CITY OF ROMULUS NOTICE OF LETTING BID NUMBER 04 / 05 -28 CITY OWNED PROPERTY

Sealed Bids will be received in the of rice of the City Clerk, 11111 Wayne Road, Romulus, Michigan 48174-1485 until 2:00 p.m. Prevailing Eastern Time on May 9, 2005. Bids will be opened at 2:15 p.m. on May 9, 2005 in the City of Romulus Community Room. (lower level).

FOR SALE CITY OWNED PROPERTY

PARCEL NUMBER	STREET LOCATION	LOT SIZE
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2. 020 02 0015 000	Wayne	40 x 130
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6. 020 03 0017 000	Waynecourse	60 x 240
7. 020 03 0020 000	Waynecourse	60 x 240
8. 020 99 0018 000	Wayne	101 x 185
9. 020 99 0019 701	Wayne	101 x 185

BID PACKETS may be picked up at the City of Romulus Assessor's Office, 11111 Wayne Road, Romulus

Publish: April 14, 2005
April 28, 2005

1954 PA 188 Proceedings Notice of Street Lighting Special Assessment Hearing Rolan Meadows Subdivision Charter Township of Van Buren Wayne County, Michigan

TO: THE RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF VAN BUREN, WAYNE COUNTY, MICHIGAN, AND ANY OTHER INTERESTED PERSONS:

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that as a result of petitions by the developer and property owners within the Township signed by the record owners of land whose footage constitutes more than 50 percent of the total footage of the hereinafter described as **Rolan Meadows Subdivision** Street Lighting Special Assessment District and the Township Board of the Charter Township of Van Buren proposes to purchase, construct and maintain street lights and to create a special assessment district for the recovery of the cost thereof by special assessment against the properties benefited therein

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the District within which the foregoing improvements are proposed to be constructed and within which the cost thereof is proposed to be assessed is more particularly described as follows: **Rolan Meadows Subdivision**, lots 1-60 inclusive.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the Township has received a preliminary street lighting layout plan from Detroit Edison indicating 12 street lights to be constructed with an annual operating cost of \$3,726.39. This plan is on file at the Township Clerk's Office and is available for examination and will further be available at the public hearing.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that a public hearing upon the proposed street lighting project design and cost will be held at the Charter Township of Van Buren Municipal Center at 46425 Tyler Road, Belleville, Michigan, commencing at 7:30 p.m on **April 19, 2005**.

At such hearing, the board will consider any written objections to any of the foregoing matters which might be filed with said board at or prior to the time of said hearing as well as any revisions, corrections, amendments, or changes to said Plans, Estimates and Costs or to said Special Assessment District.

All interested persons are invited to be present at the aforesaid time and place and to submit comments concerning any of the foregoing.

*In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, accommodations can be made available with advance notice.

Joannie Payne
Township Clerk

Publish: April 7, 2005
April 14, 2005

SPORTS

Toney, Hill lead Northville soccer with 8 goals

Jeff Novak
Staff Writer

Northville's Danielle Toney and Lauren Hill are at it again. They're scoring machines on a mission to defend their state championship.

Last year, the dynamic duo combined for 53 goals – Toney scored 29 and Hill, 24 – to lead the Mustang varsity soccer team to a state championship.

So far this year, in just three games, the two have scored eight of the teams' nine goals. Hill has racked up five. Toney recorded the other three.

Hill was an offensive force when they faced neighboring rivals Novi on Saturday. She scored three of the team's four goals in the 4-4 tie.

It was Toney though that got things going for the mustangs. Just 3:30 into the first half, she dribbled the ball past two defenders and knocked it past the goalie for a 1-0 lead.

"I was a little nervous," said Northville Coach Ron Meteyer. "It was a lot like when we played them last year.

We scored quickly but they ended up winning the game, 4-1. Normally when you take a quick lead the girls tend to let their guard down, thinking it will be easier than they thought."

The girls further unnerved their coach with a second quick goal. This time it was Hill who lofted the ball toward the net from about 40 yards out and past the outstretched hands of the goalie. That put the 'Stangs up 2-0 in the first half.

Novi didn't lay down, though. With about 14:37 left in the half they scored off of a corner kick to bite into Northville's lead, 2-1. Then, with about 8:16 left in the half Novi squared things up with a shot from about 45 yards out. With help from the wind, the ball sailed over the hands of junior goalie Katie Weicksel.

About a minute later Novi drove the ball in deep, with Northville's defense leaving a player wide open at the corner of the net. The pass was good and so was the goal. Novi took their first lead of the game.

The lead didn't last too long. About 35 seconds later,

Hill, from Toney, knocked in the equalizer to make it a 3-3 game. With time still remaining in the first half, Hill completed her hat trick when she one-touched Alaina Wolozyn's shot in for a 4-3 lead.

Northville tried to hold Novi off in the second half but, with about 23:02 left in the game, the Wildcats evened the score at 4-4.

Last year Northville lost to Novi at the beginning of the season but came back in the district tournament and defeated them.

"It's hard to be the better team twice," Meteyer said, "but it's also hard to judge who might come out on top in a second meeting when the first game ends with a 4-4 tie. We may not even face them again this year."

Northville 3, South Lyon 1

Northville came out on top, 3-1, in their first contest of the year against South Lyon last Wednesday at home.

"They were a better team than the one we saw last

See Mustangs, page 9



Dearborn Heights Robichaud varsity girls' track coach Warren Woods (left) stands with three of the four members of his 4x200 relay team, Kiana Sledge, Lyndsay Gibson and Latisha Stockard. The fourth member, Hamidah Ali is not pictured. The team recently won first place in their first meet against Melvindale last Thursday.

Robichaud track shifts into high gear

Jeff Novak
Staff Writer

Although the Dearborn Heights Robichaud girls' varsity track team is young, Coach Warren Woods said he is excited to get the season going and see what they can do.

The team only has two starting seniors this year. The rest of the team is comprised of juniors, sophomores and some stellar freshman.

"I want people to know that there's girls' track at Robichaud and some great girls running track," he said. "We set our goals high. We want to win the Mega Gold division. Kennedy and Rouge will be up there at the top, but we'll be right there with them."

Captains Lyndsay Gibson, Ashley Winston and Latisha Stockard will lead the Lady Bulldogs.

Gibson, a senior who is slated to head to the University of Cincinnati, is the most experienced of the team members, having run with the Michigan

Accelerators during the off season. Her specialty is the 300-meter hurdles but she will also participate in the 4x200-meter and the 4x400-meter relay events.

"We're looking for her to have a great season and to qualify for states," Woods said. "She's been working hard and helping with the other girls because she's so experienced."

Winston, another senior, specializes in the half mile but told Woods that she would participate in any event he asked her to, including the discus and the shot-put.

"She's one of those athletes that I can put anywhere that I need to," he said.

Stockard, only a sophomore, will participate in the 4x200-meter relay with Gibson. She will also compete in the open 200-meter, the long jump and the high jump. Last year, as a freshman, she was a state-qualifier in the 200m and the high jump.

The team will get more experience from second-year

returnee junior Nadiyah Myles who will specialize in the 100-yard dash.

The Bulldogs will also have four freshmen that will offer their talents to the team. Kiana Sledge, who also ran with the Michigan Accelerators in the off season, will be the third person in the 4x200 relay. She'll also run the 4x400 relay, an open 400m and the quarter mile.

Freshman Hamidah Ali will round out the 4x200m relay team. The future star will also run the 4x400m relay and the 100m hurdles.

Erica Lopez is the fourth freshman on the roster. She'll hit the track in 4x100-meter relay, the 4x400-meter relay and the open 400.

"She's going to do some special things for us this year," Woods said.

Sophomore distance runner Jasmine Mays will compete in the two-mile event.

Assistant Coach Tara Pruitt-

See Track, page 9

Rocket tennis team searches for wins

Jeff Novak
Staff Writer

John Glenn's new varsity tennis coach Jeff Galunas is trying to make the best of a depleted, makeshift and inexperienced team.

So far it's been a tough start to a season that's bound to get tougher. The Rockets have lost their first three games and have only won one match.

Michael Galunas recorded the only victory when he defeated Garden City's Chris Kolakowski (6-2, 6-4) at the No. 1 singles position in the opening meet last Wednesday. He is only one of three seniors on the team. The rest of the team is comprised of freshmen, sophomores and one junior.

"The team is doing about what I expected," said Coach Galunas. "We would be doing considerably better if we had a couple of seniors that we lost before the season."

"Right now our doubles teams and singles are playing one notch above their playing level," he added. "We even have some kids that are picking up a racket for the first time."

Galunas, a first-year coach at the high school, has played and coached tennis for more than 45 years. He still plays competitively. He has played in USTA tournaments and money tournaments where he said he didn't win any money but got better as a player. He also has coached little league baseball and soccer. He has coached tennis privately until the position at the high school opened up.

"It's been a good learning challenge for me teaching high school aged kids," he said. "I'm

used to instructing adults, but I've enjoyed it to this point."

Jake Delpiano is another senior who has started the last two matches against Farmington Harrison and Thurston at the No. 2 singles position. Against Garden City, he played with senior Jake Fisher on the No. 1 doubles team. Fisher now plays with junior Brandon Nikola on the first team.

The Rockets have had to forfeit matches due to a depleted lineup, but with some juggling and possibly new players the roster will fill up soon, Galunas said.

Freshman Tim Smolen, new to the team last week, made his start at No. 3 singles, replacing freshman Josh Vowles. Vowles is now on the No. 4 doubles team with fellow freshman Jacory Frowner.

Sophomores Justin Dorosh and Kory Frost appear to be set as the No. 2 team and sophomores

Nolen Langlois and Nikhil Kolothia have been playing as the No. 3 team.

Galunas said there could be some more juggling before they start conference play tomorrow at Northville. He said they could gain the experience of another senior if he decides to return.

"We're just another week or two from being competitive," Galunas said. "Once they start buying into the system there will be a difference."

"They're a fun team," he added. "We're not as disciplined as we need to be, but experience controls that to certain extent."

After their match up with Northville they will host their first of only five home games this season against Plymouth High School at 4:00 p.m. on Monday.

We would be doing considerably better if we had a couple of seniors that we lost before the season.

Mustang hitters jump to 4-0 start to season

Jeff Novak
Staff Writer

So far, so good for the Northville varsity baseball squad.

With a new coach, new system and only three seniors with extensive experience from last year, the 'Stangs are undefeated through four games.

Coach John Kostzrewa has big shoes to fill this year after long-time coach Mickey Newman retired at the end of last season with a conference championship.

"The expectations are going to be high," Kostzrewa said. "Anytime you take over a conference championship team the expectations are going to be high. I'm just hoping to be able to build on that."

Kostzrewa comes to the team with plenty of experience. In college, he played the two premier positions on the field—catcher and pitcher.

He was on the mound at the University of Kentucky and behind the plate when he transferred to Western Michigan University.

"I learned a lot about pitching at Kentucky," he said. "That's what I'm trying to pass on to these kids—about being a pitcher, not just a thrower."

Last year, he helped coach the freshmen team at Plymouth High School. He is also the strength and conditioning trainer at Northville High School and he still plays competitively in a 30 and older league.

The team lost seven seniors from last year's conference championship team, but has some strong players returning. Senior All-State catcher Matt Williams will be back this year to lead the team. He recently received a full baseball scholarship to Duke University in the fall. Senior Steve Besk will be back on the mound this year.

The rest of the infield will be new this season. Senior Andrew Smith, when not pitching, will play second base. Senior Rick Birdsall was moved from back-up catcher to third base this year. Other returning seniors will be Tyler Laing and Michael O'Brien. Dave Vanhorn will get some time on the mound, too.

At first base, junior and monster hitter Charlie Thomas is set to return. But he was moved from the outfield to first base this year. Junior Tim Parent and sophomore Bryce Jenney will share time slinging from the mound.

So far the team has made the proper adjustments and won their first four games against notable opponents South Lyon and Novi.

Most recently they hosted Novi in a doubleheader on Saturday. They won the first game, 11-1.

The Mustangs were down 1-0 after three innings but exploded with 11 runs after that for the victory. Williams spurred the assault with a lead-off double in the fourth.

Besk recorded the win from the mound with seven strikeouts to go with the one run. He also ripped a triple and recorded two RBI from the plate. Birdsall was 2-for-3.

"The fourth inning was probably the best inning offensively for a high school game," Kostzrewa said. "It was a really good team win offensively because everybody seemed to contribute."

The Mustangs won the second game, 8-2.

Thomas led the offense, going 2-for-2 with five RBI. Jenney and Parent combined for 12 strikeouts in the seven innings.

Northville also defeated South Lyon in a doubleheader last Wednesday. In the first game they pulled out an 8-7 victory.

They led, 5-1, after three frames but some walks and errors gave the Lions a 6-5 lead. Williams came to the rescue again when he led off the next inning with a triple to get things going. Northville battled back to win, 8-7.

Besk went 3-for-4 with a triple, an RBI and a run scored while O'Brien went 2-for-3 with a double and two RBI. Birdsall was also 2-for-3.

In the later game Jenney and Parent combined for seven strikeouts to blank South Lyon 4-0.

"We've spent a lot of time on fundamentals and it's paying off," Kostzrewa said. "We're being rewarded for all of the hard work the kids are doing. I can't say enough about how much progress the kids have made in such a short time."

Northville will head to West Bloomfield tonight and then to Dearborn on Friday. They start their conference play when they host Franklin at 4:00 p.m. on Monday.

Plymouth Wildcat kickers ready for first season as varsity team

Jeff Novak
Staff Writer

It's tough to be a first-year varsity soccer team anywhere. But in the Western Lakes Activity Association (WLAA), it will be baptism by fire for the Plymouth High School Wildcats varsity girls' soccer squad.

They haven't played a conference game yet but they've had six games to prepare them for the initiation this week.

So far they've had mixed results with the six pre-WLAA games including their latest 0-0 finish against Ann Arbor Huron on Monday night.

"I think this was probably the girls' best game so far," said Plymouth Coach John Delplace.

Sophomore goalie Brittany Warner earned her third shutout that game.

To start the season, they defeated Monroe, 2-0, last Wednesday at home.

In the first half sophomore Brittany Hengesh scored the team's first varsity goal and gave them a 1-0 lead. Junior Liz Martin put the game away in the

second half with her tally.

Plymouth tried to add to the lead but couldn't get past Monroe's goalie again.

"We put a lot of pressure on them but just couldn't find the back of the net," Delplace said.

Warner earned the win and shutout in net.

Things didn't go as smooth when they hosted Rochester last

Thursday night. Plymouth was outmatched in the 7-0 loss.

"Rochester has an outstanding team with two awesome forwards," Delplace said. "It was just an ugly game on our part."

It was a 4-0 match after the first half.

Amanda Bowery scored three

See Cats, page 9

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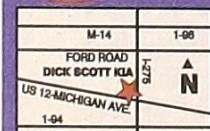
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Cats

FROM PAGE 7

goals for Rochester and Shannon Murphy, Amber Brewster, Laura Pfeffer and Camille Smith-Winberry each added one goal.

On Saturday the Wildcats participated in the Lake Orion Invitational. There, they struggled in their first two games but finished out strong with a 3-0 win against Redford Union.

The team was short five juniors who

”

I have confidence that they will pick up as the season goes on.

Coach John Delplace

took the day off to take the SATs. Delplace brought up three freshmen to help fill gaps in the roster.

It was shaky at first. They didn't score a goal until the final game. They started out with a 2-0 loss to Avondale and a 1-0 loss to St. Claire.

Delplace said Avondale was much

quicker and more disciplined than his team was with quicker ball movement. St. Claire scored off a corner kick that went just past the finger tips of Warner in the first half. In the second, Delplace said his girls got back into the game and put a lot of pressure on them but had trouble finding the back of the net again.

In the final match up against Redford Union they managed to find the back of the net a little easier. In the first half, sophomore Meredith Bailey lit up the scoreboard to give the 'Cats a 1-0 lead before the break. They came out strong in the second and freshman Aubry Warner

knocked two more tallies in for the 'Cats to give them the 3-0 win.

Brittany Warner secured the shutout.

Despite the 2-3-1 start, Delplace is confident in his team.

"The girls have only played all together twice because of the SATs," he said. "I have confidence that they will pick up as the season goes on."

Plymouth's first WLAA game was last night at John Glenn High School but the results were unavailable at press time. They host Ann Arbor Green Hills at 7:00 tonight and Walled Lake Northern at 7:00 p.m. on Monday.

Track

FROM PAGE 7

Powell is in charge of the distance runners. She said she feels the girls are ready to hit the track.

"I think the girls are ready and can't wait to get going," she said. "I think we'll have a pretty good team."

The Bulldogs ran in their first meet last Thursday in Melvindale and pulled out a 70-55 victory.

The 4x200m relay team of Sledge, Ali, Stockard and Gibson won first place as did the 4x400m relay team of Sledge, Ali, Lopez and Gibson.

Gibson also took first in the 300m hurdles and second in 100m hurdles. Stockard won the long jump competition

and finished second in the high jump, while Sledge won the 400m race. Ali won the 100m hurdles and placed second in the 300m hurdles. Mays placed second in the 2-mile run and third in the mile.

"All the girls ran well," Woods said. "I was pleased with the performance and

how they competed. Hopefully they got the first-meet jitters done with. I really like this team and feel optimistic about it."

Their next meet will be tonight at Kennedy and then they head to the Ypsilanti Invite on Saturday.

Mustangs

FROM PAGE 7

year," Meteyer said. "They made some progress and are a well disciplined team—more than in the past."

It took about 12 minutes for Toney to put the team on the board. She took a pass from senior Amy Cauzillo on the left hand side and put in the net.

The Mustangs continued to pepper the goal with shots but couldn't get anything else in until Hill punched in a pass from Toney to make it 2-0 at the half.

South Lyon responded 1:45 later and made it a 2-1 game.

Hill put the game away, 3-1, with about

14:16 left in the game.

Northville 2, Dearborn 0

Monday night's game against Dearborn High School went as expected, according to Meteyer. He said that Dearborn, like last year, played a tough defense, hoping for a 0-0 tie. It didn't work. Northville walked away with a 2-0 victory.

The first half went scoreless but senior captain Jan Kritch made it 1-0 at about the 26:46 mark and, with about 1:27 left in the game, Toney beat three defenders on he way to her third goal of the season.

Sophomore Liz Watza and freshman Julie Blaszcak split time in net for the shutout.

Northville will host Stevenson at 7:00 p.m. on Monday.

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NOW \$18,073³⁰

Stock #51320

24 MO. LEASE RENEWAL	ZERO DOWN \$195.65 PER MO. \$410.39 amount due	\$1500 DOWN \$138.00 PER MO. \$1771.21 amount due
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2005 F-150 4x2 Styleside SC

Take a look at these features... Black clearcoat, med/dark flint prem. cloth captains, 5.4L EFI V8 engine, elect. 4-spd. auto. O/D, 3.73 ratio limited slip axle, sliding rear window, trailer tow pkg., premium 6-CD with MP3, keyless entry key pad, deluxe mirror pkg. WAS \$30,395

NOW \$20,163²⁵

Stock #50885

24 MO. LEASE RENEWAL	ZERO DOWN \$239.61 PER MO. \$486.99 amount due	\$1500 DOWN \$170.00 PER MO. \$2086.37 amount due
----------------------	---	--

2005 Ford Explorer 4x4

Take a look at these features... Silver birch, graphite cloth sport buckets, convenience group, 17" bright alum wheels, 5-spd. auto. O/D trans., power moonroof, audiophile AM/FM 6-CD in dash, trailer tow pkg., cargo area cover, black roof rail. WAS \$35,525.

NOW \$24,941⁶⁵

Stock #53142

24 MO. LEASE RENEWAL	ZERO DOWN \$326.97 PER MO. \$609.59 amount due	\$1500 DOWN \$262.51 PER MO. \$2131.26 amount due
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2005 Freestyle FWD SEL

Take a look at these features... Silver Frost, shale cloth bucket, AM/FM/CD x6 MP3 radio, anti-lock brakes, message center, 17x7 5-spoke bright alum. wheels, steering wheel audio controls, fog lamps, 50/50 split seat, 60/40 split 3-pass 2nd row. Was \$27,185

NOW \$22,449⁶⁵

Stock #52648

24 MO. LEASE RENEWAL	ZERO DOWN \$260.57 PER MO. \$359.20 amount due	\$1500 DOWN \$197.92 PER MO. \$1882.80 amount due
----------------------	---	--

2005 Ford Five Hundred SEL

Take a look at these features... Pueblo gold, AM/FM/CD x6 MP3 radio, dual auto A/C, fog lamps, 17x7 7-sp. alum wheels, message center, steering wheel audio controls, 3.0L 4V V6 Duratec engine, auto 6-spd. trans., reverse sensing system. WAS \$25,045

NOW \$20,556²⁵

Stock #52779

24 MO. LEASE RENEWAL	ZERO DOWN \$269.66 PER MO. \$368.84 amount due	\$1500 DOWN \$206.26 PER MO. \$1891.64 amount due
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2005 Ford Escape Limited FWD

Take a look at these features... Black clearcoat, black prem. leather trim bucket, power 6-way driver seat, front and rear floor mats, speed control, air conditioning, perimeter alarm, 4-spd. auto. O/D transmission. WAS \$25,395

NOW \$18,908⁵⁸

Stock #51873

24 MO. LEASE RENEWAL	ZERO DOWN \$205.00 PER MO. \$420.30 amount due	\$1500 DOWN \$141.60 PER MO. \$1943.10 amount due
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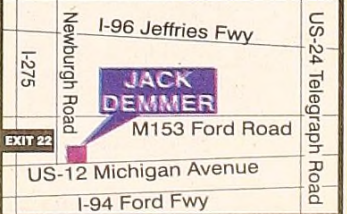
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MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE ROMULUS CITY COUNCIL HELD MARCH 28, 2005 IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER ROMULUS CITY HALL, 11111 S. WAYNE ROAD, ROMULUS, MICHIGAN 48174.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Mayor Pro Tem Randolph Gear.
Present: LeRoy Burcroff, William Crova, Randolph Gear, Charles Miller, Michael Prybyla, Debbie Romak, William Wadsworth
Administrative Official. in Attendance:
Alan Lambert, Mayor
Linda R Choate, CMC, Clerk
Pamela Morrison-Kersey, CMFA, Treasurer

1. Motion by Romak, supported by Crova to approve the agenda as amended.

Roll Call Vote Showing: Ayes - Burcroff, Crova, Gear, Miller, Prybyla, Romak, Wadsworth.
Nays-None.
Motion Carried.

05-103

2 Motion by Wadsworth, supported by Prybyla to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of the Romulus City Council held March 14, 2005.

Roll Call Vote Showing: Ayes - Burcroff, Crova, Gear, Miller, Prybyla, Romak, Wadsworth.
Nays -None.
Motion Carried Unanimously.

3A. No Action Taken.

Roll Call Vote Showing: Ayes - Burcroff, Crova, Gear, Miller, Prybyla, Romak, Wadsworth.
Nays - None
Motion Carried Unanimously.

05-104

3B. Motion by Miller, supported by Crova to approve a request from McLaughlin’s Distribution Center to erect a 40’x40’ tent for a three (3) day warehouse sale, with set up on April 21, 2005; sale to commence on April 22, through April 25, 2005; daytime use only. Tent to be erected on Southeast corner of parking lot, 35700 Mac Avenue, Romulus, Michigan 48174.

Roll Call Vote Showing: Ayes - Burcroff, Crova, Gear, Miller, Prybyla, Romak, Wadsworth.
Nays - None.
Motion Carried Unanimously.

05-105

4A. Motion by Wadsworth, supported by Crova to adopt a memorial resolution to the family of Thomas Kline.

Roll Call Vote Showing: Ayes - Burcroff, Crova, Gear, Miller, Prybyla, Romak, Wadsworth. Nays -None.
Motion Carried Unanimously.

05-106

4B. Motion by Crova, supported by Burcroff to adopt a resolution for the Romulus High Eagles Basketball Team praising them for the outstanding performance displayed during this seasons games; winning the District Championship, Regional Championship and being State Runner-ups.

Roll Call Vote Showing: Ayes - Burcroff, Crova, Gear, Miller, Prybyla, Romak Wadsworth
Nays - None.
Motion Carried Unanimously.

05-107

4C. Motion by Wadsworth, supported by Prybyla to adopt a resolution for the Romulus “Lady Eagles” Girls Basketball Team, congratulating them on their outstanding performance in winning the District Tournament.

Roll Call Vote Showing: Ayes Burcroff, Crova, Gear, Miller, Prybyla, Romak, Wadsworth.
Nays -None.
Motion Carried Unanimously.

4. Motion by Burcroff, supported by Romak to accept the Chairman’s Report.

Roll Call Vote Showing: Ayes - Burcroff, Crova, Gear, Miller, Prybyla, Romak, Wadsworth.
Nays -None.
Motion Carried Unanimously.

05-108

5A. Motion by Wadsworth, supported by Burcroff to introduce Budget Amendment 04/05

FUND/DEPT. ACCOUNT NO.	ACCOUNT NO.	CURRENT BUDGET	AMENDMENT	AMENDED BUDGET
General Fund				
Revenues				
101-3510-512.54-38	2004 Homeland Security	0	125,000	125,000
Expenditures				
101-3510-735.73-11	Operating-2004 Homeland Security	0	125,000	125,000

To appropriate 1/2 of \$256,818.00 grant for 2004 Homeland Security. The balance will be spent during 05/06 fiscal year.

Roll Call Vote Showing: Ayes - Burcroff, Crova, Gear, Miller, Prybyla, Romak, Wadsworth.
Nays - None.
Motion Carried Unanimously.

05-109

5B. Motion by Crova, supported by Burcroff to introduce Budget Amendment 04/05-23:

FUND/DEPT. ACCOUNT NO.	ACCOUNT NO.	CURRENT BUDGET	AMENDMENT	AMENDED BUDGET
Major Streets				
Expenditures				
202-4220-742.74-65	Traffic Signals	25,000	15,090	40,090
Fund Balance				
202-0000-390.00-00	Fund Balance	AVAILABLE 1,370,186	APPROPRITATE (15,090)	BALANCE 1,355,096
ACCOUNT NO.		CURRENT BUDGET	AMENDMENT	AMENDED BUDGET
Local Street				
Expenditures				
203-4320-743.74-65	Traffic Signals	6,000	3,255	9,255
Fund Balance				
202-0000-390.00-00	Fund Balance	AVAILABLE 190,820	APPROPRITATE (3,255)	BALANCE 187,565
To appropriate 1/2 of the funds for the City's portion of CSX railroad crossing maintenance fees per PA 354 and PA 5, with the balance being budgeted in the 05/06 FY Budget.				

Roll Call Vote Showing: Ayes - Burcroff,Crova, Gear, Miller, Prybyla, Romak, Wadsworth.
Nays -None.
Motion Carried Unanimously.

5C. *Deleated.

05-110

5D. Motion by Prybyla, supported by Crova to concur with the administration and adopt the a formal resolution to submit an application to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) through the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) seeking funding in an amount up to \$350,000 for expansion of the Romulus Historical Park. The Romulus Downtown Development Authority (DDA) will contribute matching funds in the amount of \$250,000.

Roll Call Vote Showing: Ayes - Burcroff, Crova, Gear, Miller, Prybyla, Romak, Wadsworth
Nays -None.
Motion Carried Unanimously.

05-111

5E. Motion by Prybyla, supported by Wadsworth to concur with Mayor Lambert and reappoint Ms. Cathy Freitag and Mr. Edward Hathcock, terms expiring 1/31/07, Mr. Daniel McAnally, term expiring 01/31/08 and to appoint Mr. Melvin Zilka, term to expire 01/31/08 to the Planning Commission.

Roll Call Vote Showing: Ayes - Burcroff, Crova, Gear, Miller, Prybyla, Romak, Wadsworth.
Nays -None.
Motion Carried Unanimously.

05-112

6A1. Motion by Romak, supported by Miller to grant authorization for the City Assessor to re-deed parcel 80-129-99-0012-001 to the State of Michigan and a Certificate of Error issued, clearing all City of Romulus interest from the property.

Roll Call Vote Showing: Ayes - Burcroff, Crova, Gear, Miller, Prybyla, Romak, Wadsworth.
Nays -None.
Motion Carried Unanimously.

05-113

6A2.Motion by Wadsworth, supported by Romak to schedule study session for the purpose of discussing soil erosion for April 4, 2005 at 6:30 p.m., City Council Chambers, 11111 Wayne Road, Romulus, Michigan 48 1 74.

Roll Call Vote Showing: Ayes - Burcroff, Crova, Gear, Miller, Prybyla, Romak, Wadsworth
Nays -None.
Motion Carried Unanimously.

05-114

6A3. Motion by Burcroff, supported by Wadsworth to concur with the Advisory Appointment Committee and appoint Emery Long to the Board of Zoning Appeals as two year alternate, term expiring March 30, 2007.

Roll Call Vote Showing: Ayes - Burcroff, Crova, Gear, Miller, Prybyla, Romak, Wadsworth.
Nays - None.
Motion Carried Unanimously

05-115

11. Motion by Prybyla, supported by Wadsworth authorizing the Treasurer of the City of Romulus to disburse funds as listed in Warrant 05-06 in the amount of Four Hundred Thirty Thousand, Two Hundred Sixty Eight Dollars and Eighty Cents (\$430,268.80).

Call Vote Showing: Ayes - Burcroff, Gear, Miller, Prybyla, Romak, Wadsworth
Nays -None.
Abstain - Crova.
Motion Carried.

12. Motion by Wadsworth, supported by Romak to adjourn the regular meeting of the Romulus City Council.

Roll Call Vote Showing: Ayes - Burcroff, Crova, Gear, Miller, Prybyla, Romak, Wadsworth.
Nays -None.
Motion Carried Unanimously.

Linda R. Choate, CMC, Clerk
City of Romulus, Michigan

I, Linda R. Choate, Clerk for the City of Romulus, Michigan do hereby certify the foregoing to be a true copy of the minutes of the regular meeting of the Romulus City Council held March 28, 2005.
Linda R. Choate, City Clerk

Publish: April 14, 2005

B PROGRESS IN Business\$

Hidden treasures Consignment shop offers discount prices, quality, selection and service

Scott Spielman
Editor

It didn't take long for Todd and Michele Schiffnar to realize they were on to something after they opened their own business.

Consignment Outlet opened in September of 2003 on Ann Arbor and Sheldon roads in Plymouth in a small space with about two racks of merchandise.

"Within a week, people were backing up their trucks and unloading things," Michele Schiffnar said.

In fact the business quickly outgrew that location and expanded into two separate ones: one at Middlebelt and Five Mile roads, in the old Ethan Allen building, and one on Ford Road in Canton, the site of the former Master Lighting store, just east of Sheldon Road. That building has been there for decades, and Schiffnar said they still use it as a landmark when giving directions.

"Then people call us and ask where we're located, that's what we tell them," she said. "We still, to this day, have people walk past all our signs, looking for light bulbs."

The Canton store has been open for almost a year, now. It opened last July. Coupled with the Livonia location, it gives the Schiffnars more than 26,000 square feet of space, enough to make them Michigan's largest consignment dealer.

The concept of the consignment shop has proved a popular one, according to Schiffnar.

"People like to shop at consignment shops," she said. "They like to be able to find things that are a higher quality than at a garage sale, and people like to sell things without having the hassle of a garage sale."

Inside the locations, shoppers will find a wide variety of ever-changing merchandise, according to Schiffnar. There are things like furniture – both antique and modern – old knickknacks and collectibles, clothes and more. The shops are also registered liq-

uidators, which means they get new products like electronics and housewares, as well.

"You're going to find not only unique and rare things, but new items, too," Todd Schiffnar said.

The store also features specialized products, like the Original Bee's Wax polish, which is endorsed by the Antiques Roadshow. Todd Schiffnar said the Consignment Outlet shops are the only place in the Detroit metro area to find that.

The products they sell change frequently, Michele Schiffnar said, as new ones are brought in and the old ones, sold. She said picking what to accept and what not to is often the most difficult part of the business.

"Sometimes you tell someone they're better off giving something to someone they like," she said. "Sometimes we take something just to see if it will sell."

That's the thing about this business," she added. "You look at some things and wonder: what does the rest of the house look like? It's a personality test."

The benefit of shopping at a consignment shop, she said, is the value. Most things are priced at between 50 and 33 percent of what consumers would have purchased them for when they were new. There are also unique items that can't be found in a typical department store, too.

Pricing is often difficult, as well – particularly in a location like Canton, with so many other retailers nearby. Any item priced higher than \$50 is open for negotiation, too.

"You've got to be responsive," she said. "We've got Kohl's, Target and Meijer's. You have to do the research to be competitive with all of those."

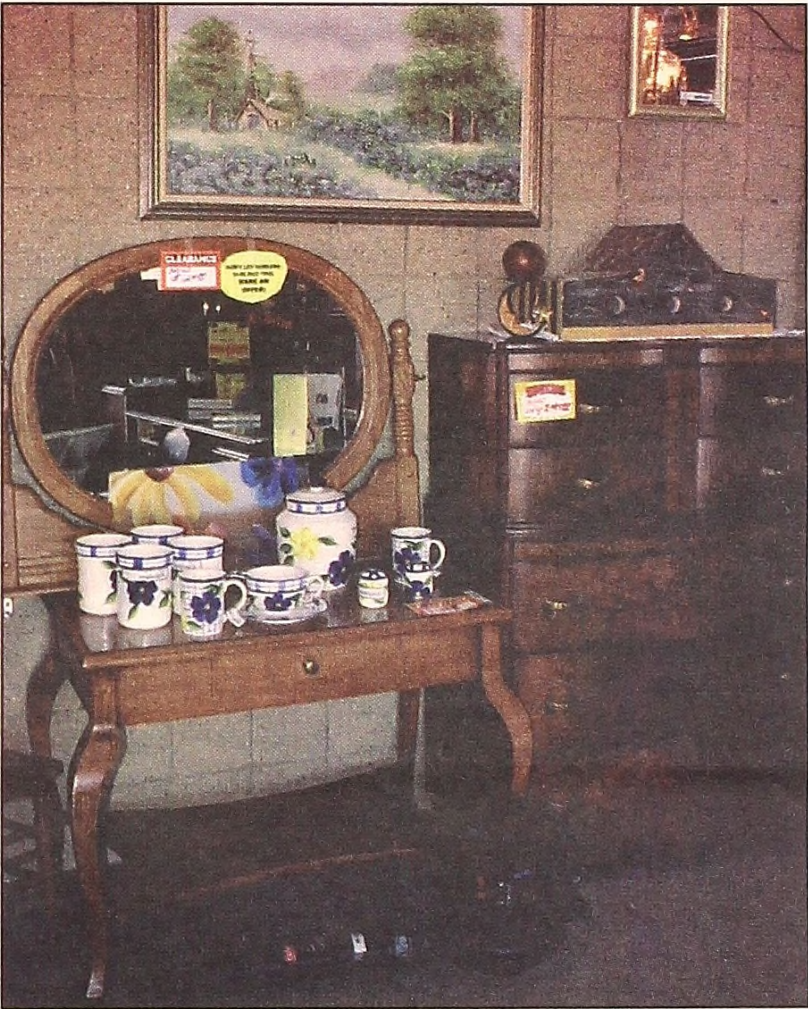
One way they've done that is by embracing technology. Consignment Outlet is a registered power seller with eBay – a distinction they've earned through the large volume of transactions and positive feedback. They can handle those types of sales for clients, as well.

The products they receive are typically kept on display for 90 days. Furniture has a six-month shelf life. After that, the Schiffnars and their staff decide whether the product will sell, at all, if they should return them or if they should donate them. If they choose the latter, they have a dedicated charity to give them to: The Friendship Circle, based in West Bloomfield, which helps out handicapped children.

Schiffnar said she's enjoyed the business, so far. It's quite a change from Todd Schiffnar's previous business – he sold cars at Don Massey Cadillac in Plymouth for more than 20 years. Operating their own business is a lot of work, but it's been worth it, she said.

"It's very difficult and it requires a lot of time, but the fun part is that it's different every day," she said. "You get to meet a lot of people from the community."

Sometimes, she added, that community is a culture in and of itself. She said there are several groups of people that spend the day traveling from consignment



Paintings that no longer match the color scheme, dishes that have been replaced and even antique furniture can be found at Consignment Outlet, along with lawn tools like leaf blowers.

shop to consignment shop, checking things out and seeing what's new that week.

A large part of their success, she said, is the people they have working for them. Some are former shop owners themselves, and all tend to get informed about the merchandise to better

answer questions. They also greet everyone who enters the store warmly.

"The hardest part of any business is getting good help," she said. "If you have good employees, you can take care of all the other aspects. We've been very fortunate."



A dining room table and chairs, complete with a full set of china is also currently for sale at the shop, which features several styles of tables and chairs.



Michele Schiffnar and her husband, Todd, have Consignment Outlet location in Livonia and another in Canton. Receptive customers have discovered terrific bargains and great service at both locations, the business owners said.

Clean sweep

Generations of customer service are key to success of Banks' stores

Scott Spielman
Editor

Nearly 50 years ago, Herman Banks wanted to go into business for himself.

For Banks, who had worked on the assembly line for Henry Ford and at the Hoover Corp., the decision on what type of business to open was a fairly easy one, and the first Banks' Vacuum was born.

The store, on Ford Road in Dearborn, opened up in 1956 with the intent to provide a complete service for vacuum consumers: sales, service and that family-owned business touch.

The first store serviced televisions as well, according to Ken Banks, Herman's grandson, but they now exclusively cater to the vacuum market.

Banks is the third generation to be involved in the business, too. His father ran the company for 20 years, retiring in 1985, when he took over. Since then, the business has expanded from one location to eight, along with an independent franchise, given them nine locations, in all, throughout the Detroit Metro Area.

With stores in places as varied as Plymouth, Novi, Livonia and Grosse Pointe Woods to complement the original Ford Road location and a facility in Troy —

which is where the main office and warehouse is located — Banks said the idea behind the store is the same, everywhere.

"We sell every new vacuum on the market, every brand," he said. They sell vacuums that are usually only shipped directly to dealers, too. "Those tend to be the higher quality brands."

The market has changed since Banks took over the family business 20 years ago, too. Big box department stores have proliferated; firms like Kmart, Sears, Meijer and Target have materialized, but business has remained steady for his business. In fact, Bank's Vacuum is the largest independent vacuum dealership in the country, with the largest showrooms.

Banks said it's a dedication to customer service that has helped keep them competitive.

"You can buy a vacuum cleaner anywhere; you can get prices anywhere," he said. "But you can't get price, service and knowledge. That gives us the edge."

In addition to selling the vacuums and other floor-cleaning products, Banks' also services them. They're the authorized warranty facility on every brand, and that's no accident, he said. Every technician is factory trained. In fact, before he allows his employees to sell the vacu-



Plymouth store manager Tim Kellogg demonstrates just one of the numerous and varied models at the Banks store. The vacuum cleaner specialists have been in the business of sales and service for nearly 50 years and take pride in their reputation for product knowledge and service.

ums, they have to have repair experience, too.

"When the sales people make a statement to a customer, they usually know what they're talking about," he said. "They're all factory-trained technicians."

The dedication to customer service has kept the business thriving through the price wars during the 1950s and 1960s with Mike Adray at Adray's Appliance

in Dearborn or with Ollie Fretter and his chain of stores. Now, the business employs about 25 people at their different locations, which feature a wide variety of products.

That's even true at the Ann Arbor Road location in Plymouth, Banks said, which is the smallest of the nine Banks Vacuum sites.

"It's still got as much as the other stores, just not as much

stuff," he said.

In the down economy, the marketplace is tough, and Banks said it's getting even tougher. He said he'll continue to concentrate on the same things, though, service and value, to weather the current market conditions.

"We're building a base. We're doing a lot of foundation building," he said. "We don't have any plans to get out of this area."

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Dealerships take a personal interest in clients

Jason Carmel Davis
Staff Writer

A family-owned and operated business is blazing new trails in the automotive industry.

Holiday Automotive Group is made up of three automobile dealerships. Livonia Chrysler Jeep at 30777 Plymouth Road, Livonia; Century Dodge at 13500 Telegraph Road, Taylor and Holiday Chevrolet at 30250 Grand River Avenue, Farmington Hills.

The stores have been in business since 1979, 1979 and 1984, respectively.

Entrepreneur Walt Norris started the business after having a stake in North Brothers Ford. Following his death, his daughter, Colleen McDonald, took over as president

and general manager after working in many departments for the company.

McDonald's road to success started when she became a switchboard operator. After that, she sold cars each summer at North Brothers throughout her college career. Following her graduation, she started working full-time as a sales manager.

McDonald then became finance and insurance manager before taking over as general manager. At the age of 30, she became president of the Holiday Automotive Group.

McDonald—a Northville resident—is in a unique position. She said that it's unfortunate that the automotive industry remains a male-dominated business.

"I think women are scared to get into this because of a fear of the unknown," McDonald said.

"But women have kids, too. And as much as we want to partner up with the guys, the hours are tough."

Chris Marinos, vice-president and general manager of Century Dodge, said it's a rarity to see a woman with such a high profile role in the auto world. He

also made it clear that the family business wasn't handed to McDonald.

"She's been a hard worker from the beginning," Marinos said. "She does her job to the fullest, and everyone here respects her for that. It's unique to see her in this position. This isn't something you would have seen in the past"



Colleen McDonald



The Holiday Automotive Group has been around for some time now. Each of the three independent chains has sold their fair share of cars, and their sales staff prides themselves on developing relationships with their customers.

McDonald said her father taught her things school couldn't. She said one of the major things he showed her was to remain cost-conscious so that if and when sales get low, a business can still survive.

That cost-effective approach has lead to each of the three dealerships beginning to do much of their advertising and marketing as one unit. The website, weloveholiday.com, advertises for each dealership, gives anyone who visits the opportunity to search for new and used vehicles, lists specials each dealer

offer, and has a link for employment opportunities.

Marinos said the entire Holiday staff has taken on McDonald's diligent approach. He said that the group has maintained solid sales since the inception. He also said Holiday has never had a lay-off period.

No lay-offs means Holiday has a sales staff with a very high tenure. Marinos said that gives his group an advantage when it comes to making deals.

"We take a personal approach with all our customers," he said. "We realize that repeat business

and referrals are a large part of our business, so our salespeople do get personal with our customers."

That approach has enabled the three auto dealers to sell their fair share of cars. Last month—as a whole—the three dealerships sold 396 cars. Last year, the Holiday Automotive Group sold about 2,500 cars.

McDonald said the staff has a lot to do with those numbers.

"We have such a great group of people working together," she said. "That's one of the keys to any successful business."

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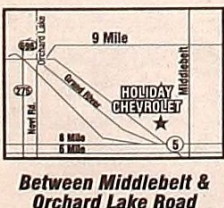
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Dealer brings 3 generations of experience to area

Meghan Chatham
Staff Writer

The Thayer family has been a part of the automobile industry for three generations, and it is a legacy that fills Adam Thayer—general manager of Ralph Thayer Automotive in Livonia—with pride.

For 35 years, the family-run business has been a familiar name to the residents of Monroe.

"My dad has had a long history in Monroe of being somebody who was up front and had some integrity, so we're hoping to bring that up here, too," said Thayer.

To make sure that happens, Thayer said that since the Livonia store opened about a year ago, he has kept a close eye on the response he receives from customers.

"We measure a lot of the things we do by our customer satisfaction index," said Thayer. Currently, he said that shows a satisfaction level in the mid-to-high 90s. Now, he said, they want to keep it that way by offering customers the respect and personalized assistance that have been company traits for years.

"We try to put the customer first," he said. "We try to be up front and honest, both in sales and in service. We don't want to have any 'surprises' for the customers."

It is a service that has made at least one worried family feel a lit-

tle more secure. Buried among the piles of customer surveys is one from a woman who contacted the service department half an hour after they had closed one Saturday. She called from out of state to ask for help on behalf of her son, whose car had broken down on the side of the road as he came to the city for an internship. The staff stayed late, arranged for a tow truck, and gave the young man a loaner car for the weekend. In the end, he was so satisfied that he bought a new car from them.

The dealership specializes in new Mazda, Hyundai, and Volkswagen vehicles. Staff members often ask potential buyers about what they currently drive, why they are changing, and what they want in a new car, Thayer said, to help match them with the vehicle that will best meet their needs. Lately, one of the biggest concerns has been gas mileage and safety, and Thayer said that many of their cars are ranked among the safest on the road—and some achieve up to 47-48 miles per gallon.

Even after the purchase is made, the company can help make maintenance and repairs simple since its service department specializes in such vehicles and features factory-trained mechanics. There are loaner vehicles available for use while cars are being serviced, too.

For people more interested in



used vehicles, the lot at Thayer Automotive offers selections in many different makes and models from manufacturers ranging from Mazda and VW to Ford and Chevrolet.

"We try to keep whatever the customer might want," Thayer said. "We just want to keep good reliable used cars."

Ralph Thayer Automotive is located at 34501 Plymouth Road in Livonia, between Farmington and Wayne roads. The dealership is open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Monday and Thursday, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday, and from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday. For more information, visit www.thayerauto.com.



Automobile models and styles may have changed over the years, but at Ralph Thayer Automotive in Livonia one thing has remained the same: their commitment to friendly service. The family-owned dealership, which specializes in Mazda, Hyundai, and Volkswagen vehicles, prides itself on achieving the same high levels of customer satisfaction they have provided to drivers for three generations.

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Wounded Warriors

Benefit will aid injured veterans

Scott Spielman
Editor

Westland Councilman Bob Stottlemeyer said even he is surprised at how quickly support is growing for a benefit to help wounded veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Called the Back to the 40s Charity Dance, the benefit will aid the Wounded Warrior Project and Veteran's Haven, both 501(c)3 organizations.

"Most of the people who we go to ask for help are helping us," he said. "It's just coming together like you wouldn't believe."

He and his wife, Betty, started to put together the June event in early January. He said the thought behind it went back a lot further, though, to when veterans returned to the U.S. from the conflicts in Vietnam. Stottlemeyer said he was disappointed in the treatment those veterans often received.

"I made up my mind that, if I ever had a chance, I would do something about it," he said.

The event will take place from 4-11 p.m. on June 5 at Burton Manor in Livonia. Bill Johnson, the owner of that facility, is one of the people who have stepped forward to help out, Stottlemeyer said. He's donating the entire facility for the evening. That

means more than 1,500 people can take part in the event.

The event will feature a nationally-recognized big band, the U.S. Army Reserve Band, U.S.O representatives and the Satin Dolls, a singing group that emulates the Andrew Sisters. During band sets, wounded veterans will get up to say a few words, tell their stories and explain why the help is needed. The emphasis will not be on recruitment, Stottlemeyer said.

"There will be something going on all throughout the evening," he said.

The \$30 ticket will cover the cost of hors d'oeuvres and the entertainment. There will be real food catered by the manor, as well as a throw back to old-time military cuisine - specifically, chipped beef on toast, more popularly known by it's emergency moniker, S.O.S.

There will be a silent auction, as well, with items as varied as a football signed by the Green Bay Packers, Tigers ticket packages, restaurant packages, an autographed poster of John Travolta and more.

Stottlemeyer has been making the rounds in nearby communities and already received support from the mayors and city councils in Westland, Wayne, Livonia and Garden City.

The proceeds from the event will be split between the Wounded Warriors Project and Veteran's Haven.

The Wounded Warrior Project is a national organization set up to help wounded veterans returning from overseas; it strives to ease the financial and emotional burden of families by subsidizing necessities such as housing, food, day care and more.

Veteran's Haven is a local organization, headquartered in Wayne, that provides transitional housing for veterans that have fallen on hard times. They provide additional support services, as last year opened a four-unit home for veterans trying to rejoin traditional society.

"They do good work," said Wayne City Councilwoman Donna McEachern.

"It's a good organization," added Wayne Mayor Al Haidous.

Tickets are available at Burton Manor in Livonia, the Hellenic Center in Westland, Veteran's Haven on Wayne Road in Wayne and can be ordered by calling Stottlemeyer at (734) 721-4594.

"We've kept the price down as much as we possible could and still make some money for the groups," Stottlemeyer said. "We're hoping to sell as many tickets as we can."

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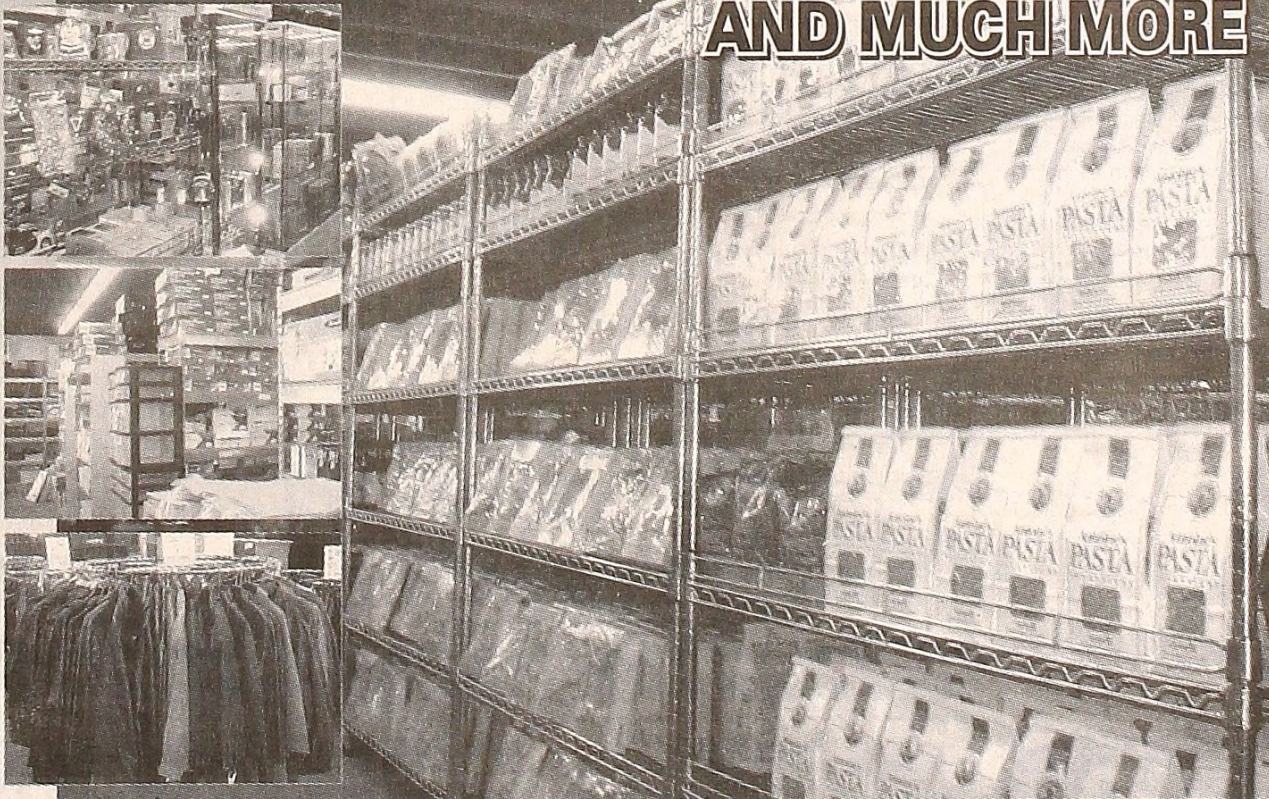
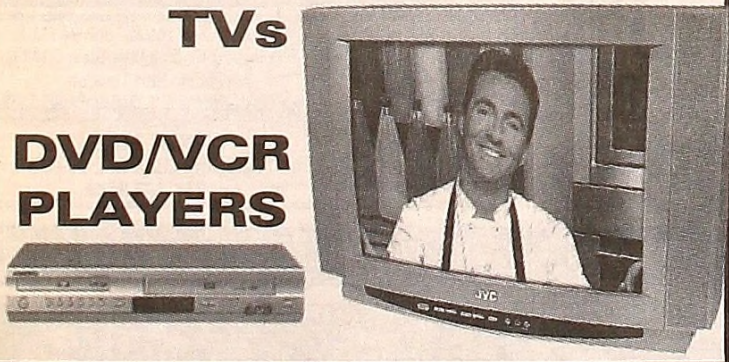
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1. Obituaries

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CDL-A DRIVERS. Earn .36¢ to .44¢. Assigned late model equip; Excellent hometime. 1 yr. exp. Positions filling up fast! Call Garner Today! 877-622-5742.

57. Antiques

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Over 100 Dealers

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33. Child Care

Cozy Corner Child Day Care Warren/Beck area Fully licensed, CPR & First Aid trained, Fun / Loving environment, 10 years experience. Meals provided. Immediate openings Call 313-525-1014

34. Specialized Services

LEEF LAWN CARE
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50. Pets & Supplies

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59. Auctions

Notice of Public Sale Pursuant to State Law, a sale will be held on April 19, 2005 at 1:00pm on the following units:

D34-Mae Lackey: Furniture, Maytag washer, dryer, boxes, toys, clothes, steam cleaner;

J30-James Lewis: Furniture, boxes;

E26-Charles Meltzer: Furniture, snow blower, guitar, boxes;

F26-Alfred Tarr: TV, video cassette, clock, boxes;

G5-Michael Byrn: Love seat, couch, table & chairs, vacuum cleaner, boxes.

AMERICA'S BUDGET STORAGE
40671 Joy Road
Canton, MI 48187
(734) 459-6444

CITY OF WESTLAND NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION
On APRIL 19, 2005 the Westland Police Department will conduct public auctions of impounded abandoned vehicles. The first auction will begin promptly at 10:00am at Westland Service Towing, 37501 Cherry Hill, Westland, MI, County of Wayne, where the following vehicles will

be offered for sale to the highest bidder:

1990 Ford Ranger
Pk Trk Blue
1FTCR14T4LPB16293

1995 Geo Metro
2Dr Blue
2C1MR2263S6786355

1990 Chevy Lumina
4Dr Black
2G1WL5473L1180708

1991 Volkswagen Golf
4Dr Red
3VWFA21G7MM048464

1997 Ford T-Bird
2Dr White
1FALP62WXVH109321

1996 Ford T-Bird
2Dr Green
1FALP6241TH148214

The second auction will begin promptly at 11:00am at Westland Car Care, 6375 Hix Rd., Westland, MI, County of Wayne, where the following vehicles will be offered for sale to the highest bidder:

1987 Saab 900S
4Dr Blue
YS3AS35D9H2006559

1985 Ford Cr. Victoria
4Dr Blue
2FABP43FR2FX240355

1998 Ford Contour
4Dr White
1FAFP6638WK225182

1993 Chevy Cavalier
2Dr White
1G1JC144XP7233540

1990 Honda Accord
2Dr Burgundy
1HGCB7241LA049207

1995 Plymouth Neon
4Dr Black

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Christian Education (9:15 a.m.-11:00 a.m.)
Morning Worship Service (11:15 a.m.-1:30 p.m.)

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Sunday School 10A.M. - Service 11A.M.
Wednesday Evening Bible Study 7:30P.M.
Pastor Earl Duncan

Morningstar Church

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www.powerofthewordcogic.org.

1P3ES67C9SD603396

1993 Mercury Cougar
2Dr Black
1MEPM6248PH653465

All vehicles are sold in "as is" condition. Bidding on all vehicles will start at the amount due for towing and storage. Vehicles may be deleted from this list at any time prior to the start of the auction.

30 DAY NOTICE OF AUCTION
Due to unknown ownership, 30 day notice is hereby given that the vehicle listed below will be auctioned after MAY 14, 2005 unless it is claimed by the owner prior to that time:

1990 Lincoln Mark VII
2Dr Gray
1LNCM92E1LY789226

WESTLAND MINI STORAGE
1600 Newburgh Road
Westland, MI 48186
734-729-1710

Will be holding an auction on April 23, 2005 at 10:00am for the following units:

Unit #710-Wayne Kilgore of Westland: Kitchen items, small appliances, furniture, misc. tools, washer/dryer, misc. items and boxes

Unit #818-Amy Garris of Garden City: Baby items, some small appliances, misc. boxes and home items.

87. Rooms For Rent

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Tel-96 Inn 313-535-4100.
Fairlane in Novi
248-347-9999

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TODAY!

88. Duplexes For Rent

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Call for list of available 2 & 3 BEDROOM duplexes, and single family homes. Section 8 welcome. Lead safe units available. Professional full-time management. Norplex Associates 734-722-6444 EHO

89. Apartments For Rent

1 Bedroom efficiency apartment in Wayne. All utilities paid. \$150 / week
Call: 734-729-5770

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1 bedroom, lower level. 2,000 square ft. \$700 Mo.
313-706-1075

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No pets
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Wayne, Near Wayne Road - Nice, Clean
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96. Houses For Rent

INKSTER
Spacious 3 bedroom, Basement,
Option 2 Buy \$650

INKSTER
Brick bungalow, Finished basement, Garage \$690

20 Homes available
\$450-\$750

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3 bedroom bungalow, Appliances, fenced, Option 2 Buy \$850

PLYMOUTH
Basement, garage, Appliances, yard, New windows \$700

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734-513-RENT

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Fenced 4 pets \$850

WAYNE
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Fenced for pets,
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RENTAL PROFESSIONALS
734-513-RENT

WESTLAND
Ranch, garage, Appliances,
Fenced 4 pets \$650

WESTLAND
3 bedroom, garage, Air, appliances,
Option 2 Buy \$750

18 Homes available
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RENTAL PROFESSIONALS
734-513-RENT

106. Houses For Sale

Inkster
Best Buy!
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725 Sunningdale
3 bed, 1 bath
bungalow. Many updates.
\$102,700
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Tri-level, 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, family room, natural fireplace, beautiful updated kitchen w/oak cabinets and ceramic floor, plus appliances, C/A, Florida room, 2-car garage, fenced yard, security alarm.
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All new updates,
Appliances stay,
Oak kitchen,
2.5 car attached garage
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115. Autos For Sale

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8C 2001 Lincoln LS
Excellent Condition
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117. Trucks & Vans

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118. Freebies

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THE SCENE

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We go through life prejudging things—that's human nature. We judge books by their covers—figuratively and literally—the same way we judge movies by their lavish previews.

It was easy to make the assumption that the new action/comedy flick *Sahara* was going to be nothing more than a simple rip off of Stephen Spielberg's *Indiana Jones* series.

Not so.

You know what they say about people who assume things? It makes an "ass" out of "u" and "me."

And I will have none of that.

Sure, first-time director Breck Eisner, yes, the son of departing Disney CEO Michael Eisner, probably takes on more story than he or any other director can handle by adapting Clive Cussler's 700-plus page yarn, but he really seems to have fun trying.

And that's what movies are really all about. Right? And fun is exactly what you get from *Sahara*.

Sahara is what it is—an action/buddy movie with over-the-top thrills, outlandish escapades and an unbelievable storyline.

Let me stress unbelievable.

The story begins in West Virginia during the Civil War where an ironclad confederate battleship tries to escape from enemy fire with a belly full of golden loot, never to be seen again.

The story jumps ahead to modern times where Doctor Eva Rojas (Penelope Cruz) and a colleague are investigating an outbreak of an unusual epidemic in northern Africa. While investigating the illness Eva is attacked by a masked assailant. But that's when Navy SEAL turned treasure hunter Dirk Pitt (Matthew McConaughey) enters the picture. He saves the young doctor's life and takes her aboard the NUMA (National Underwater Marine

See *Sahara*, page 19

Reviewed By
Jeff Novak
Staff Writer

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THE SCENE



Sahara

FROM PAGE 18

Agency) ship that he works on as a salvager of ancient relics.

Pitt gets wind that the Civil War ship may be somewhere in the nearby vicinity—somewhere along the Niger River in Africa. Obsessed with the vanished iron giant and the treasure expected to be on it, Pitt sets out on an adventure of lifetime in search for what could be considered his holy grail of treasure hunts.

Pitt, along with long time friend and wisecracking sidekick Al Giordino (Steve Zahn), barrows Admiral Sandecker's (William H. Macy) yacht for his mission. As a part of the deal he has to transport Eva up the Niger to Mali where she thinks the outbreak started.

Mali is torn by civil war with half controlled by a tyrant warlord General Kazim played by Lennie James and the other half by an indigenous tribe. Kazim is in cahoots with Yves Massarde (Lambert Wilson), a shady industrialist who runs a hazardous waste dump in the middle of the desert.

After an exciting boat chase on the Niger, Dirk, Al and Rudi (Rainn Wilson) escape some of Kazim's men. While Rudi is sent back to the admiral to warn him about what is going on, Dirk and Al set off to save Eva once again. They race across the desert on camel back just in time to save the in-trouble doctor from more of Kazim's men.

Then they end up in the hands of the tribe, who are enemies of Kazim, where Al stumbles upon a cave painting that describes what happened to the ancient naval ship.

That's not all. They also stumble upon Massarde's waste dump and realize that the hazardous material is leaking into the underground water system and causing the sickness that Eva is investigating. They also find out that if they don't stop the leak the waste could have a "Chernobyl-effect" on the Atlantic having environmental, cultural and political consequences.

From then on the film turns to non-stop action as the trio of heroes take on Massarde and Kazim. The adventure is punctuated with witty banter and timely jokes. And somehow they just happen to stumble across a battleship in the middle of the desert.

I know it sounds unbelievable and convoluted but the story is just simply a blueprint for the characters



to have fun. And it shows.

Although the similarities to Indiana Jones are there, from the action sequences to the comic relief, it should be thought of as more homage to the series and character rather than a sharp jab to the ribs with an elbow. It is known through the Indiana Jones trilogy that he never loses his beloved hat. However, in Sahara Al doesn't only lose his favorite hat but several others along the way as well.

Moviegoers can take what they want from it, which will probably plenty of laughs but remember *Sahara* is simply what it is—a fun movie worth the time. And that's what it's all about. Right?

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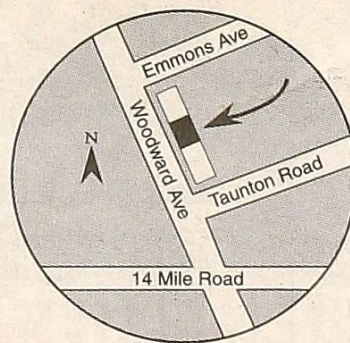
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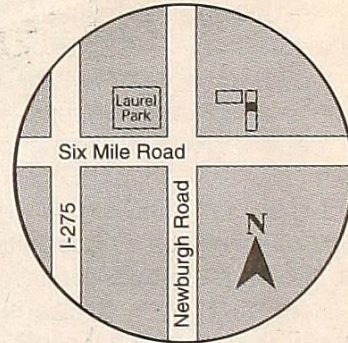


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